

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 111933

46

ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SCS-03

SCA-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-04 USSS-00 IO-14 AID-20 OC-06

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 111933

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC ET PINS

SUBJECT: TENNECO FIVE AND AMERICAN NURSE

REF: ADDIS ABABA 5928

1. MINISTER WILLIAMSON OF CANADIAN EMBASSY MET MAY 28 WITH AMBASSADOR HOFFACKER AND AF/E OFFICERS TO DISCUSS FUTURE ACTION IN TENNECO FIVE AND NURSE KIDNAP CASES. WILLIAMSON EXPRESSED OTTAWA'S CONCERN THAT GOC MINEXTAFF SHARP WILL BE ASKED BY PRESS OR POLITICAL OPPONENTS WHAT GOC IS DOING TO GAIN RELEASE OF TENNECO HOSTAGES, AND THAT REPLY ALONG LINES THAT TENNECO HAS BEEN HANDLING NEGOTIATIONS, PARTICULARLY WHEN NO PROGRESS MADE IN TWO MONTHS' TIME, WOULD BE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE. MOREOVER, CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IN ADDIS HAS BEEN RECOMMENDING JOINT U.S.-CANADIAN DEMARCHE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 111933

TO IEG EMPHASIZING LATTER'S RESPONSIBILITY IN OBTAINING RE-

LEASE OF CAPTIVES. FACT THAT ANOTHER CANADIAN IS NOW A HOSTAGE COULD CREATE FURTHER SERIOUS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS FOR SHARP AND GOC.

2. WE BRIEFED WILLIAMSON GENERALLY ON DUAL CONTACTS IN KHARTOUM AND ASMARA AND EVENTS AT GHINDA. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, MENTION SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR SPELL OUT DEMANDS MADE BY ZEIN. WE NOTED THAT EMBASSY MAINTAINING CLOSE CONTACT WITH CANADIAN EMBASSY IN ADDIS AND REITERATED EMBASSY'S HOPE THAT CHANNELS BEING UTILIZED BY TENNECO WOULD RESULT IN RELEASE OF AT LEAST SOME CAPTIVES

WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. WILLIAMSON SAID GOC NOW ASSESSING MEANING AND CONNECTION OF RECENT EVENTS AND WHAT ACTION IT SHOULD TAKE AS CONSEQUENCE. GOC HAD GIVEN TENNECO CONSIDERABLE TIME TO PRODUCE RESULTS, AND FEELING NOW EXISTS THAT TENNECO ROUTE HAS RUN ITS COURSE WITHOUT SUCCESS. MOREOVER, IT NOW APPEARED THAT THERE WOULD BE POLITICAL DEMANDS WHICH WOULD IN ANY CASE REQUIRE IEG TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN NEGOTIATIONS. HE INQUIRED IF USG KNEW SPECIFICALLY WHAT DEMANDS CAPTORS WERE MAKING.

4. COOTE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO US WHETHER THERE WERE POLITICAL DEMANDS OR NOT. WE HAD RECEIVED CONTRARY INDICATIONS. OBVIOUSLY IF THERE WERE POLITICAL DEMANDS, IEG WOULD HAVE TO GET INTO ACT. HOWEVER, EMBASSY STRONGLY URGED THAT WE HOLD OFF FOR SEVERAL MORE DAYS TRYING TO INVOLVE IEG DIRECTLY UNTIL WE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN WHAT DEMANDS WERE AND WHETHER TENNECO UNABLE EFFECT RELEASE ON ITS OWN. WE WILL INFORM CANADIAN EMBASSY AS SOON AS WE HEAR SOMETHING DEFINITE. WE EQUALLY SURE EMBASSY ADDIS WILL SO INFORM AMB. REYNOLDS.

5. WILLIAMSON MOST APPRECIATIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND SAID HE WOULD CONVEY OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOC. HE COULD NOT ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, WHAT MINISTER SHARP'S REACTION WOULD BE. HE THOUGHT THAT IF SHARP WERE FORCED IN LIGHT OF EVENTS TO MAKE STATEMENT, HE WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT GOC

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PAGE 03 STATE 111933

DETERMINED TO PRESS IEG TO DO ALL IT CAN TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF HOSTAGES. AT VERY LEAST, HE WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE VERY GREAT GOC CONCERN OVER CASE, REITERATE IEG RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELFARE OF FOREIGNERS IN ETHIOPIA AND NOTE CANADIAN EMBASSY HAS MAINTAINED CONSTANT CONTACT WITH CONCERNED PARTIES, E.G., IEG, USG AND TENNECO, SINCE CAPTURE LAST MARCH.

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO WHAT HAD BEEN SAID TO PRESS RE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS, WE GAVE CANADIANS TEXT OF MISSIONARY PRESS STATEMENT CONTAINED REFTEL. HOFFACKER ADDED THAT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE PRESS NOT AWARE OF HELICOPTER INCIDENT AND WE DID NOT PLAN TO MENTION IT. OF COURSE, SOMETHING LIKE THIS COULD EASILY BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.

7. WE ANTICIPATE THAT IF GOC DOES HOLD OFF FROM PRESSING US TO MAKE JOINT DEMARCHE TO IEG OR FROM INSTRUCTING ITS OWN AMBASSADOR TO MAKE UNILATERAL DEMARCHE, GIVEN POTENTIAL SEVERE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES, IT WILL BE FOR FEW DAYS ONLY. CANADIANS DO NOT APPEAR TO BE WILLING TO PUT

ALL THEIR EGGS IN TENNECO BASKET MUCH LONGER. BOTH THEY AND WE WOULD PREFER FOR TWO COUNTRIES TO TAKE PARALLEL COURSE IF FEASIBLE, ALTHOUGH WE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE STRONGEST CONSIDERATION TO EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS. IF PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN OR HAVE MADE NO PROGRESS IN NEXT FEW DAYS, WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S FURTHER VIEWS RE DESIRABILITY OF JOINT U.S.-CANADIAN DEMARCHE TO IEG. RUSH

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